

AFTER MANY YEARS.  
One of the Mysteries of the War Cleared up.

The awful explosion on the steamer Sultana, near Memphis, twenty-three years ago, in which nearly two thousand Union soldiers lost their lives, has always been a mystery. The survivors of their reunions have recently made a number of statements regarding the affair, but the most sensational story has been told by a resident of this city, William C. Streator. His statement fixes the explosion as the result of design. He claims that a noted confederate blockade runner and mail carrier named Robert Lowden, better known during the war as Charles Dale, was the author of the terrible disaster.

Yes, I know something about the Sultana disaster, said Mr. Streator, in reply to an inquiry. I can give the cause of explosion. A torpedo enclosed in a lump of coal was carried aboard the steamer at Memphis and deposited in the coal pile in front of the boilers for the express purpose of causing her destruction. The man who placed the torpedo on the boat is my authority; for I had the statement from his own lips. He was a notorious confederate mail carrier and blockade runner, was captured some five or six times, and once, at least, was sentenced to death by a military commission in this city.

Toward the close of the war, it will be remembered, President Lincoln issued an order that no one should be executed under military laws until the sentence had been confirmed by the president. It was while awaiting confirmation of the sentence that he escaped from the military prison in this city and made his way south, where he remained until after the close of the war. His friends obtained a pardon for him from President Johnson, and, armed with that, he returned to his home in St. Louis. It was after his return home that he told me the story of how he smuggled the torpedo on board the Sultana. His real name was Robert Lowden, but he was always known in the city by his alias, Charlie Dale. He was a painter by trade and worked in the same shop with me for William H. Gray some three years after the close of the war.

Dale was at that time a young, vigorous, dare-devil. He possessed bravery of a certain kind, I think, equal to that of any man who ever lived. He was cool and calculating in his disposition, but at times he drank heavily, and when in his cups was disposed to talk a little too much for a man with a record like he had. It was while he was drinking one day that he and I got talking about the war and the burning of so many boats by the confederate agents came up in the course of conversation. He told me that he had fired no less than half a dozen steamboats on the Mississippi. I asked him in an off-hand way what he knew of the Sultana explosion. Then he told me the story of the torpedo in the coal, and, using his own expression, it had got to be too-ticklish a job to set a boat afire and get away from her.

Out of a hundred other of Dale's daring exploits during the war one in particular impressed me forcibly as showing the character of this remarkable man. It was accomplished while the federal fleet was lying between Memphis and Vicksburg. Dale had escaped from prison in this city, and was on his way south. He was in a quandary for several days as to how he was going to get through the federal lines. Finally he hit upon a plan and it was successful. He got a coffin at Memphis, chalked it up with white lead, and launched it on the Mississippi. Then he laid himself out in the ghastly-looking boat and floated down the stream. He passed the government gunboats at night, and two or three times when the current of the stream drifted the coffin up against the hulls of the boats he reached out with his hands, pushed his craft clear, and landed in the morning safe within the confederate lines.

Before the war Dale was a member of the old Liberty-volunteer fire company in this city and was well known to a great many people living here now. He died in New Orleans during the yellow fever epidemic along in the latter part of the '50s. But to return to the Sultana explosion. I have read carefully all the information I could find about it, and from

the character of the explosion I have been led to believe that Charley Dale's story of the torpedo is true.

MAD DOG IN A SCHOOL-ROOM.

Miss Mollie Green, an attractive young lady of 18, who teaches school on Cypress creek, in Perry county, Tenn., was the heroine in a thrilling scene. Her father, Robert Green, lives across the Tennessee river, in Hickman county. The little log school house was quiet and the children busy with their lessons, when a shaggy dog foaming at the mouth, snapping and biting, dashed in at the door and made toward one of the children. The brave little woman thought only of the children in her care, and springing between them and the intruder told them it was a mad dog. She kicked at it, her skirts protruding her, and by the aid of a heavy rule kept it at bay until all the children had fled. The infuriated animal repeatedly sprang at her throat, but she was agile and resolutely held her ground. When all the little ones were gone she desperately fought off the dog until she reached the door, which she pulled too after her and fell fainting outside. The children in the meanwhile ran to the nearest homes, eighth of a mile distant, and gave the alarm. Two men soon came and killed the dog, which had been terrorizing the neighborhood for some days. The grateful parents of the children took up a subscription and gave the young woman a fine saddle horse. Her clothes were literally torn to ribbons during her severe encounter.

A DREAM OF THE PAST.

I wandered to the country, Tom; I sat beside the brook, I tried to catch the simble trout with baited line and hook. The banks were just as muddy and the current just as slow as in the days I used to fish, some twenty years ago. No people now, were with me Tom; I squatted there alone and tried to yank out massive fish, were there a snail were none. Mosquitoes bit me just as hard and chanted just as low as when they used to bore their wells, some twenty years ago.

And while I tried to swip: them once, and break their dreary song, the bank rolled down into the creek and carried me along. The water was as moist as my friend, the mud as deep below, as when I rolled into the creek some twenty years ago. The line got wound about my limbs, the hook stuck in my eye, the pole twirled round the same old way and hit me on the fly; I reeled off curses quaintly then, and naught could stop their flow—I cursed as loudly and as long as twenty years ago. And when I started through the woods to reach my humble home my eyes were full of last year's leaves, my ears were full of foam; a snake sat up and bit me, Tom; just as that snake you know, that left its trademark on my leg some twenty years ago. And then I to the market went, as of course, will guess, and having captured n'er a fish, I had to buy a mess; and then those withered scrubs I bought I to my wife did show, and to d the same old fairy tale of twenty years ago.

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